

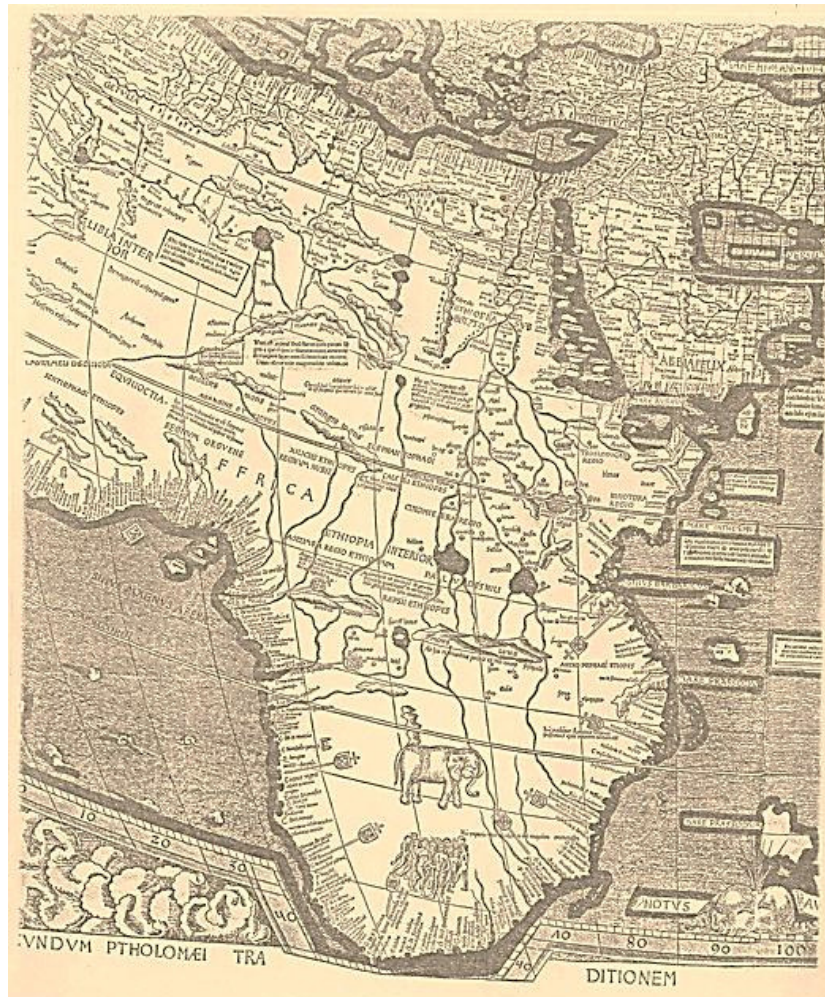
“On a Relatively Light-skinned African Tribe”

by Abbé Durand

ANTHROPOLOGY SOCIETY OF PARIS

Meeting of October 23, 1879

Robert K. Stevenson: Translator and Editor



Map of 16th Century Africa

“On a Relatively Light-skinned African Tribe”

I shall brief today, messieurs, in my remarks, which pertain to a puzzle that has interested me greatly. During the 15th and 16th Century, the Portuguese performed voyages from one shore to the other in Africa. In 1592 Lopez pointed out the existence of a relatively light-skinned tribe located near Loango in the western Congo; this tribe engaged in the gold and ivory trade, and also competed successfully with the Arab slave-dealers.

Nowadays, this tribe is said to be in Mozambique. For three centuries it has been driven in a rotary motion, and now finds itself on the eastern side of the African continent.

You might wonder how a light-skinned tribe can be encountered in central Africa. I believe I have perhaps found an answer to this question. Albuquerque, the Portuguese explorer, related that millions of Indians from the Brazilian region had, in fact, been sold to Lisbon and were transported to the coast of Africa. These Indians originated from the areas around the Amazon. Therefore the hypothesis that this bronzed and relatively light-skinned tribe is a remnant of these exported Indians seems quite plausible. Hence, we see from the time of Lopez this errant tribe in the African continent searching for a home that it does not appear yet to have found.

DISCUSSION

Doctor ERNEST HAMY. I do not believe that there is any need to go as far as Brazil in order to explain the presence of certain relatively light-skinned tribes inhabiting various parts of central Africa. I have questioned Monsieur Serpa Pinto about the qualities of the Negroes possessing yellowish skin that he has observed, and I have come to believe that these Kassikers, as this journeyer called the white Negroes, are none other than the veritable Bushmen.

The Haw-Koîns of Damaraland, situated only a few degrees south of the region where the *Kassikers* live, are pure Bushmen.

Doctor PAUL BROCA. I must say that there is some doubt in my mind about the very existence of these so-called white Negroes.

Abbé DURAND. For your information, Doctor Hamy, Monsieur Serpa Pinto has, in fact, been sharply criticized by the Geographic Society of Lisbon; in particular, they charged that his alleged discoveries had been previously made, and that the corresponding facts resulting therewith were already known.